

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the present amendment and in view of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

I. Rejection Under 35 USC § 112

Claims 1-13 are pending in the present application, and claims 1, 2, 12 & 13 are amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding office action, claims 1-6 and 12 were rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph as indefinite. Claims 1, 2, 12 and 13 are amended to provide proper antecedent basis for the term "keyword categories," and claims 2, 12 and 13 are amended to recite "writing to the virtual space table," in light of the comments noted in the outstanding office action. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested this rejection be withdrawn.

II. Rejection Under 35 USC § 102

Claims 1, 2, 4, 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent number 6,393,460 to Gruen. This rejection is respectfully traversed because Gruen does not teach or suggest displaying "virtual space characteristics including a tabulation of relevance points associated with at least one of a plurality of keyword categories," as in the amended independent claims.

Amended claim 1 includes features of calculating "virtual space characteristics including a tabulation of relevance points associated with at least one of the keyword categories," support for which is found in the originally filed specification at least in Figs. 5 and 6 and at page 19, lines 5-11. Further, the communication support method of claim 1 includes features of "displaying at least one of a keyword category having a highest tabulation of relevance points and a list of relevance point tabulations associated with a plurality of the keyword categories," support for which is found in the originally filed specification at least in Fig. 6 and at page 20, lines 8-24. Independent claims 2, 12, and 13 are amended to include similar features.

As an advantage, a user can easily ascertain important characteristics of a channel because the method displays either one category with the most relevance points, or several categories and the number of relevance points for each category.

In contrast, Gruen in Fig. 1 merely discusses listing a plurality of topics. However, Gruen does not teach or suggest showing a relevance between each topic and channel or a difference in relevance among topics or channels. Therefore, in Gruen a user cannot ascertain the important characteristics of a topic, which is different from the pending claims.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted amended independent claims 1, 2, 12 and 13 and each of the claims depending therefrom patentably distinguish over Gruen.

III. Rejections Under 35 USC § 103

Claims 3 and 11 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Gruen in view of U.S. Patent number 6,564,244 to Itoh. This rejection is also respectfully traversed.

Claims 3 and 11 depend on claim 2, which as discussed is believed to patentably distinguish over Gruen. Moreover, Itoh merely discusses a system of realtime notification of information matching search preferences, and does not teach or suggest the features of independent claim 2 nor of dependent claims 3 and 11. Also, claim 3 includes features of calculating virtual space characteristics based on keyword categories in accordance with chat volume in the virtual space from a message time until a specified time elapses, which is different from realtime notification of information matching search preferences, as in Itoh. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted claims 3 and 11 patentably distinguish over Gruen and Itoh for this reason as well as for their dependence on claim 2.

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Gruen and U.S. Patent number 6,425,012 to Travato. This rejection is also respectfully traversed.

Claim 5 depends on claim 2, which as discussed is believed to distinguish over Gruen. Further, Travato only discusses placing a person in a chat room based on a time of request to access a chat session, but does not teach or suggest the features of independent claim 2 or claim 5. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted claim 5 patentably distinguishes over Gruen and Travato.

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Gruen and U.S. Patent number 5,941,947 to Brown. This rejection is also respectfully traversed.

Claim 6 depends on independent claim 2, which as discussed is believed to patentably distinguish over Gruen. Further, Brown only discusses determining rights of users on a computer network to access data entities, but does not teach or suggest the features of the independent claims. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted claim 6 patentably distinguishes over Gruen and Brown.

Claim 7 was rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Gruen and U.S. Patent number 6,065,056 to Bradshaw. This rejection is also respectfully traversed.

Claim 7 depends on independent claim 2, which as discussed is believed to patentably distinguish over Gruen. Further, Bradshaw only discusses a method for blocking vulgar and

pornographic material by monitoring computer operations, but does not teach or suggest the features of independent claim 2. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted claim 7 patentably distinguishes over Gruen and Bradshaw.

Claims 8-10 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Gruen, Bradshaw and U.S. Patent number 6,076,100 to Cottrille. This rejection is also respectfully traversed.

Claims 8-10 depend on claims 7 and 2, which as discussed are believed to patentably distinguish over Gruen and Bradshaw. Moreover, Cottrille only discusses instructing a chat system to expel a chat device which sends unsuitable messages after deciding not to report the unsuitable message to other chat devices, but not teach or suggest the features of claim 7 or independent claim 2. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted claims 8-10 also patentably distinguish over Gruen, Bradshaw and Cottrille.

IV. Conclusion

In light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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